(c) if so, how many post offices have been selected for this purpose in Karnataka;

(d) how many of them are in Bangalore and in Bangalore Rural District; and

(e) whether Government have any proposal to extend this facility to more post offices in other cities of Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, on an average 4,75,000 prepaid recharge coupons of mobile service of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) are being sold every month in Karnataka.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) 468 post offices have been selected for this purpose in Karnataka.

(d) There are 252 such post offices in Bangalore urban district and 40 such post offices in Bangalore rural district.

(e) The scheme is being extended to other districts of Karnataka progressively.

Development of postal service

2240. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state the action taken to develop the business of postal services to make them more competitive and financially viable organization?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): Some of the steps taken by the Department to develop the business of postal services to make them more competitive and financially viable are:

1. A Business Development Directorate was set up in 1996 for focused management of Premium Products and Services. Business targets are allotted to Circles, which are monitored every month. Premium products such as Speed Post, Business Post and Express Parcel Post have been introduced to compete with the couriers in the mail and express market segment. For large volume customers of

premium products, value additions such as pre-mailing facilities, pick up services, Book Now Pay Later Scheme, Monthly Accounting, Discount etc. have been offered. Customised business packages to suit the needs of corporate customers/service providers are provided. Web-based technology has been inducted in Speed Post Centres and post offices for providing on-line track and race (Speednet) system for tracking of Speed Post articles, various web-based services such as e-bill post for collection of bills at the post office counter, and e-post for delivery of e-mail messages to postal addresses have been introduced. Infrastructure and retail network post offices have been offered to the customers on commercial basis for promotion and sale of their products and collection of bills. Sustained publicity and promotion of premium products and services is being done to make the premium products and services visible to the public. Market surveys are being conducted to analyse the market and environment to make the products more competitive and user friendly.

2. Financial products such as International Money Transfer with association of Western Union Financial Services International, distribution of Mutual Funds and Bonds and Pension products for various banks, electronic fund transfer through VSAT network of the Department to facilitate end to end fund transfer and warrant payment schemes have been introduced.

3. Various policy initiatives under Tenth Five Year Plan have been taken to increase the revenue, reduce costs, improve productivity, efficiency and quality of postal services to make them more competitive and financially viable. These initiatives include introduction of new products and services, diversification and optimal utilization of the network and resources.

Installation of Mobile Telephone Tower in Jangia Telephone Exchange

2241. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up Mobile Telephone Tower in Jangia Telephone Centre in Distt. Shimla for the benefits of telephone